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AGAINST ALL ODDS





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AGAINST ALL ODDS



FOR SEVEN DAYS IN MAY, 1940, CRETE WAS A BATTLE INFERNO. THE GERMANS HAD LANDED IN FULL FORCE, QUICKLY BRINGING THE BRITISH AND ANZAC DEFENDERS TO THEIR KNEES. BUT IN THAT SAVAGE CONFLICT TWO MEN CAME TO FORGET OLD ENMITIES AND TO STAND, SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER, AGAINST THE COMMON FOE.

Chapter 1. *The Smouldering Hate*

FRESH FROM A COAL-MINING VILLAGE IN ENGLAND, DAVE GARNETT WAS WORKING AS A LINE-RIDER ON A VAST SHEEP STATION IN THE AUSTRALIAN OUT-BACK. THERE WAS MUCH THAT WAS UNFAMILIAR AND TRYING TO THE ENGLISHMAN. HEAT, DUST, LONELINESS, THE SILENCE THAT GOES WITH IMMENSE SPACE... AND THERE WAS KARL BROGAN, THE TOUGH, GNARLED AUSSIE FOREMAN . . .

REMEMBER THIS, POMMIE. I DIDN'T TAKE YOU ON. THE BOSS DID THAT. ME, I WOULDN'T GIVE A POMMIE! A JOB FOR ALL THE TEA IN CHINA!



CONTEMPTUOUSLY BROGAN SPAT OUT THE NICKNAME EVERY AUSTRALIAN-BORN NATIVE USED FOR THE ENGLISH IMMIGRANT.

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT AGAINST ME, BROGAN? I'VE A RIGHT TO KNOW.

YOU'RE A POMMIE! YOU LOT WANT BIG MONEY WITHOUT THE WORK! YOU DON'T SPEAK LIKE US! YOU'RE ALWAYS WHINING ABOUT THE OLD COUNTRY!



GARNETT FELT THE ANGER SURGE UP INSIDE HIM BUT HE CONTROLLED IT WITH AN EFFORT.

WHAT'S EATING YOU, BROGAN? DID ONE OF US POMMIES CLEAN YOU OUT AT CARDS LAST PAYDAY?

WHY, YOU PALE-FACED LITTLE PIP-SQUEAK..!



THE TWO MEN STARED AT EACH OTHER, AWARE ONLY OF THE TIDE OF DISLIKE AND SUSPICION THAT RAN BETWEEN THEM.

I'VE BROKEN BETTER MEN THAN YOU'LL EVER BE, COBBER.

I'M NOT SCARED OF YOU, BROGAN. ANY TIME YOU WANT TO PROVE THAT, YOU KNOW WHERE TO COME.



THE FOREMAN RELAXED HIS GRIP SLOWLY AND HIS LIPS LIFTED IN A THIN SMILE.

OKAY, POMMIE. WE WON'T FIGHT ON THE JOB. IT'S PAYDAY TOMORROW AND THE BOYS GO INTO MARBLE SPRINGS TO CELEBRATE. I EXPECT TO SEE YOU THERE.

I'LL BE THERE.



GARNETT KNEW THE AUSTRALIAN HAD SET OUT TO RILE HIM INTO A FIGHT.

THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED, BROGAN, AND NOW YOU'RE SATISFIED. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? WHICHEVER WAY IT GOES, I LOSE MY JOB!



NEXT DAY GARNETT RODE INTO THE STATION HOUSE TO CLEAN UP AND COLLECT HIS PAY. AS HE CAME OUT . . .

YOU WANT TO BACK OUT, POMMIE? YOU'VE STILL GOT TIME. THE BOYS WILL UNDERSTAND. I'VE LICKED EVERY ONE OF 'EM ONE TIME OR ANOTHER!

HERE'S ONE YOU HAVEN'T LICKED. I'M READY WHEN YOU ARE.



THE LITTLE TOWNSHIP OF MARBLE SPRINGS SHIMMERED IN THE HEAT HAZE WHEN THE SHEEP STATION CREW RODE IN TO CELEBRATE THEIR MONTHLY PAY-DRAW.



STRIPPED OFF, BROGAN WAS BUILT LIKE A BEAR, WITH HITTING POWER WELDED INTO THE BULGING MUSCLES OF HIS ARMS AND SHOULDERS.



Against All Odds

GARNETT WAS LEANER BUILT, BUT TOUGH, MAULING LABOUR AT THE COAL FACE HAD TUNED HIS BODY TO WHIPLASH ENDURANCE.

DON'T LET HIM RUSH YOU, COBBER. JAB HIM OFF AND USE YOUR FEET TO GET AROUND. AND WATCH THAT RIGHT HOOK OF HIS. IT'S A REAL BEAUT.

THANKS, DINGO.

BROGAN CAME IN ON HIS TOES, MOVING WITH SURPRISING SPEED, CHOPPING AT THE ENGLISHMAN WITH SHORT CLUBBING BLOWS...

BROGAN KNOWS HOW TO USE HIS DUKE. WATCH THAT RIGHT OF HIS!

FLASHY STUFF, SID. WAIT TILL HE GETS ONE REALLY HOME.

SUDDENLY BROGAN SHIFTED HIS FEET THEN HURLED A SLEDGEHAMMER RIGHT THAT TOOK THE ENGLISHMAN HIGH ON THE TEMPLE. SOMETHING SEEMED TO EXPLODE IN GARNETT'S BRAIN.

TAKE HIM, KARL! I'M LAYING TEN TO ONE THE POMMIE GOES DOWN! TEN TO ONE!



BLOCKING, PARRYING, DUCKING . . . BY SHEER INSTINCT, GARNETT HELD OFF THE AUSTRALIAN WHILE HIS HEAD CLEARED AND THE ROARING IN HIS EARS SUBSIDED.

COME ON, POMMIE. MAKE A FIGHT OF IT. THIS AIN'T AN EIGHT-DAY BICYCLE RACE. YOU SCARED OR SOMETHING?



FOR TEN MINUTES UNDER THE SEARING SUN GARNETT EVADED BROGAN'S RUSHES OR PULLED HIM UP WITH STRAIGHT-ARM JABS. THEN GRADUALLY THE PATTERN CHANGED. BROGAN CLAWED HIS WAY INTO A CLINCH

NEXT TIME I FIGHT A POMMIE REMIND ME TO BRING MY RUNNING PUMPS. YOU'RE NO FIGHTER, GARNETT!

I'M STILL ON MY FEET, COBBER. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



THE TURNING-POINT CAME WHEN BROGAN, FACE SLASHED AND SWOLLEN FROM THE ENGLISHMAN'S RIPPING COUNTER-PUNCHES, LOOSED A DESPAIRING SWING. GARNETT DUCKED AND DROVE IN A SHORT, POWER-PACKED RIGHT TO THE BODY,



AS BROGAN DROPPED HIS GUARD, GARNETT STEPPED INSIDE AND RIPPED IN A FLURRY OF COMBINATION PUNCHES TO HEAD AND HEART, SLOWLY, THE ROCK-LIKE AUSTRALIAN BEGAN TO CRUMPLE . . .



AS GARNETT PULLED HIS SHIRT OVER THE GREAT THROBBING BRUISE THAT WAS HIS BODY, BROGAN UNSTEADILY CLIMBED TO HIS FEET.



I'VE GOT
SOMETHING
TO SAY TO YOU,
GARNETT!

DON'T WASTE
YOUR BREATH,
BROGAN. I KNOW
WHAT IT IS. I'M
OUT OF A
JOB!

THEN GARNETT STOPPED IN BEWILDERMENT.

LISTEN, POMMIE. NOBODY'S
FIRING YOU BECAUSE YOU LICKED
YOUR FOREMAN! MAYBE THAT'S THE
WAY THEY DO IT IN POMMIELAND, BUT
NOT OVER HERE! I JUST WANTED
TO SAY . . .

GARNETT SAW THE HATRED SMOULDERING
IN BROGAN'S DEEP SET EYES AND HE KNEW
THERE COULD NEVER BE ANY
RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THEM. IT WAS
THERE TO LAST!

YOU WON THE FIRST FIGHT,
THAT'S ALL, BUT IT DOESN'T
END THERE. BECAUSE I WON'T
REST TILL I'VE POUNDED YOU
INTO THE DIRT!
THAT'S A
PROMISE.

SUIT
YOURSELF,
BROGAN!



SO GARNETT RETURNED TO THE LONELY DULGERY OF LINE-RIDING WHILE BROGAN BROODED SOMBRELY OVER DEFEAT TILL IT BEGAN TO WORK IN HIS BRAIN LIKE A POISON.

LICKED BY A
PUP THAT'S STILL
WET BEHIND THE EARS!
I'LL NEVER HEAR THE
LAST OF IT. I'VE GOT TO
GET EVEN SOMEHOW
OR I'M
FINISHED!



FROM THAT DAY BROGAN SET OUT TO HAZE THE ENGLISHMAN IN EVERY WAY HIS INGENUITY COULD DEVISE.

THAT HORSE IS
EDGY. MOUTH'S SORE
TOO. YOU'RE ROUGH
WITH ANIMALS,
POMMIE.

I KNOW HOW TO
TREAT A HORSE, BROGAN.
YOU ONLY CAME HERE TO
PICK FAULTS!



GARNETT'S PATIENCE WAS WEARING THIN, BUT HE ENDURED IT RATHER THAN GIVE BROGAN THE EXCUSE HE NEEDED.

LOOK AT THE SAG IN THAT WIRE. WHAT DO YOU DO ALL DAY ... SLEEP?

I'VE BEEN IN THE SADDLE FOR NINE HOURS. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT WIRE AND YOU KNOW IT. WHY DON'T YOU LAY OFF ME, BROGAN?



TWO DAYS LATER, JUST BEFORE DAWN, GARNETT AWOKE TO HEAR THE FRENZIED BLEATING OF HARRIED SHEEP. HE ROLLED OUT OF HIS BLANKET.

DINGOES! THEY'RE IN AMONG THE SHEEP!



THE SKULKING WILD DOGS, SCOURGE OF THE AUSTRALIAN SHEEPMAN, FLITTED LIKE TAWNY GHOSTS THROUGH THE WIRE, LEAVING DEAD AND MAIMED SHEEP BEHIND THEM.



BROGAN RODE UP. HE WAS SMILING AS A MAN DOES WHEN HE SCENTS VICTORY.

FIVE SHEEP
MAULED TO DEATH,
HUMP SO YOU LET
THEM DINGOES GO
TO WORK WHILE
YOU SNORED YOUR
HEAD OFF!

NO, BROGAN.
I WAS AWAKE. I THINK
I GOT TWO OF THEM.
YOU'LL FIND THEM THE
OTHER SIDE OF
THE WIRE.

BROGAN HAD FOUND THE EXCUSE HE HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR. HE HAD GOT RID OF THE
MAN HE HATED WITHOUT LOSING FACE.

GARNETT,
YOU'RE FIRED!
MAKE UP YOUR HORSE
AND GET BACK TO THE
STATION. I'LL SEND UP
A REAL LINE-RIDER
TO TAKE OVER.

THAT'S WHAT YOU
WANTED, BROGAN. YOU
TRIED HARD ENOUGH...
I'LL SAY THAT
FOR YOU!

IT WAS THEIR LAST ENCOUNTER. OR SO THESE TWO MEN THOUGHT, MEN TO WHOM THE FUTURE WAS LIKE A SHROUDED WINDOW.



SO LONG, BROGAN.
DON'T GET INTO ANY MORE
FIGHTS YOU CAN'T
FINISH!

AND DON'T
EVER LET ME MEET
YOU AGAIN, POMMIE.
TAKE MY TIP, GO BACK
TO ENGLAND TO THAT
HOLE IN THE GROUND
YOU USED TO WORK.
IT SUITS YOU!

A WEEK LATER GARNETT ARRIVED IN MELBOURNE TO FIND THAT WORLD EVENTS HAD PASSED HIM BY.



I SEE THE BIG SHOW'S
STARTED. OLD ADOLF'S
PUT POLAND THROUGH
THE MINCE. WE'RE
ALL IN IT NOW.

LET'S
SEE THAT
PAPER,
MATE.

GARNETT WAS FOOT-LOOSE AND FANCY-FREE. LIKE MANY ANOTHER AUSTRALIAN ON THAT FATEFUL DAY HE MADE A SNAP DECISION.

RECKON IT'LL BE
OVER IN SIX MONTHS.
HITLER'S BIT OFF MORE'N
HE CAN CHEW THIS TIME.
YOU THIN'KIN' OF HAVING
A GO, COBBER?

WHY NOT? WHERE'S
THE NEAREST
RECRUITING
CENTRE?



Chapter 2. *The Desperate Men*

EIGHTEEN MONTHS HAD PASSED. IT WAS APRIL 1941. PRIVATE D. GARNETT OF THE 6TH. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION FOUND HIMSELF LANDING AT PEAKUS IN GREECE.

LOOK AT THAT!
JERRY'S BEEN
HAVING A
BIRTHDAY
PARTY!

HERE, WHO
SAID WE WAS
WINNING THE
BLOOMIN'
WAR?

GARNETT WAS NOT NEW TO BATTLE. HE HAD SHARED THE NORTH AFRICAN VICTORIES UNDER WAVELL . . . JUST AS HE HAD SHARED THE BITTER RETREAT FROM ROMMEL'S ALL-CONQUERING ARMOUR.

WHAT'S
ALL THIS
ABOUT, DAYE?

SEEMS THE GREEKS ARE
RESISTING JERRY AND WE
PROMISED TO HELP. HALF
OUR GEAR LIES ON THE SEA-
BED . . . WE'RE SHORT OF
'PLANES . . . WE'VE GOT GUNS
WITHOUT AMMO . . . AND AMMO
WITHOUT GUNS! BUT WE
PROMISED . . . SO HERE
WE ARE, GUS!

SPRING CAME LATE THAT YEAR. AS THEY CROSSED THE FLAT THESSALONIAN PLAIN TOWARDS THE IMMORTAL THERMOPYLAE PASS, THE DRIVING RAIN LIFTED . . . AND THEY SAW THE BLACK VULTURE-SHAPES OF THE GERMAN STUKAS.



FRESH FROM THEIR LIGHTNING CONQUEST OF YUGOSLAVIA, THE GERMANS HAD MASSED THEIR ARMOUR AND AIRCRAFT TO POUND THE ALLIES INTO THE EARTH.



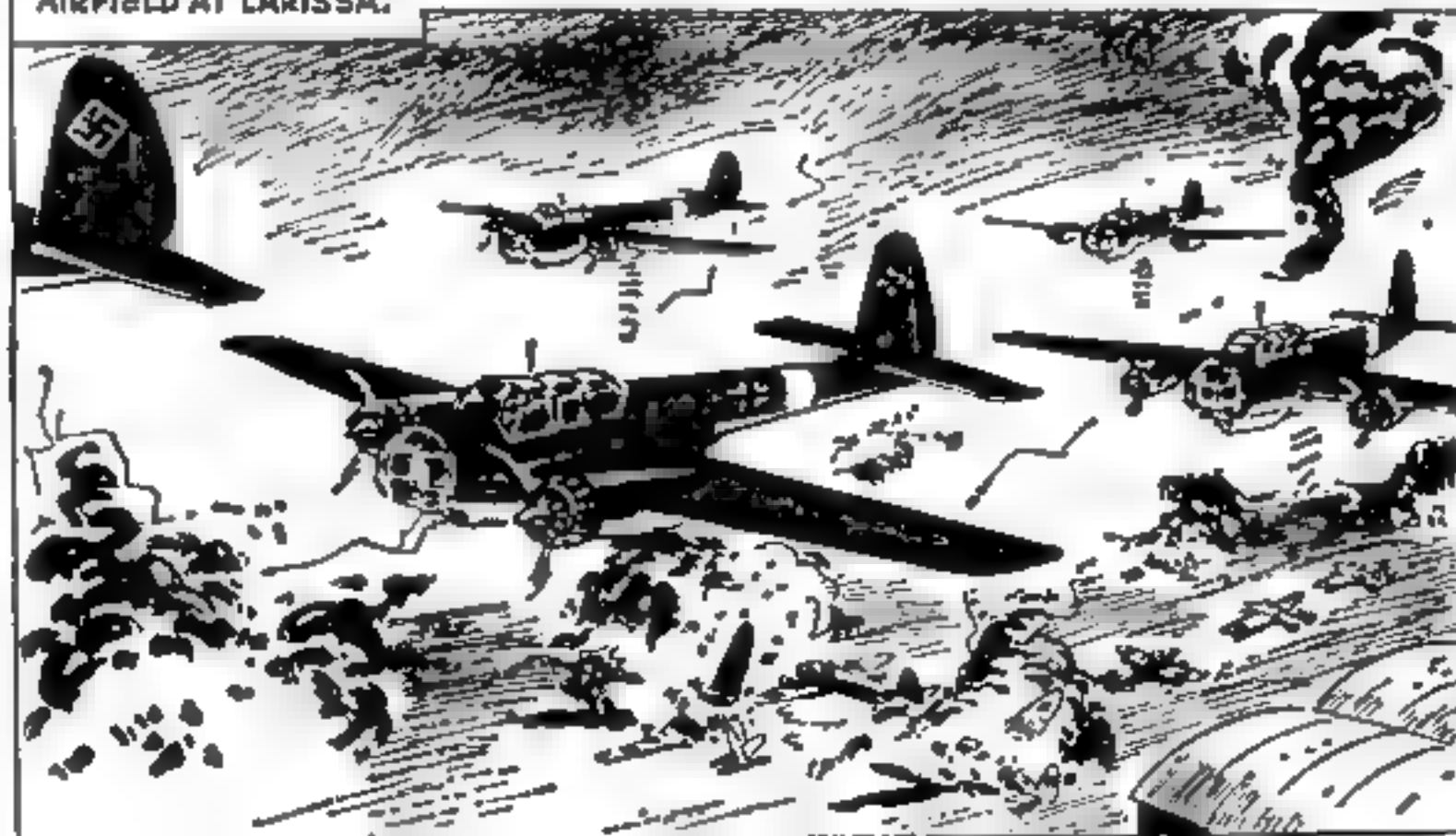
DAZED AND BATTERED BY INCESSANT BOMBING, THE SOLDIERS LOOKED VAINLY SKYWARD FOR THE ALLIED PLANKS WHICH MIGHT HAVE SAVED THEM.

WHERE'S OUR STUFF? WHAT THE HECK'S HAPPENING? ONE SQUADRON OF HURRICANES COULD KNOCK OFF THESE JUNKERS ONE BY ONE!

DON'T ASK ME, MATE! THEY MUST BE BUSY SOMEWHERE ELSE.



GARNETT WAS HEARD THE TRUTH THAN HE SUSPECTED. THAT MORNING THE GERMANS HAD MADE A DAWN ATTACK ON A FORCE OF BLENHEIMS AND HURRICANES ON AN ALLIED AIRFIELD AT LARISSA.



A STONY-FACED GROUP OF SENIOR AIR OFFICIALS STUDIED THE SMOKING RUINS.

BAD SHOW, SIR. SIXTEEN BLENHEIMS AND FOURTEEN HURRICANES WRITTEN OFF WE CAN PATCH UP THE OTHERS.

I WANT EVERY SERVICEABLE UNIT MOVED BACK TO ATHENS AT ONCE. WE MAY NEED THOSE AIRCRAFT DESPERATELY!



MEANWHILE, THE ANZACS TOOK EVERYTHING THE STUKAS COULD HAND OUT . . . AND GAVE A LITTLE IN RETURN.

GOT YOU! YOU BIG BLACK NAZI BUZZARD! GOT YOU!



THEN, MERCIFULLY, THE RAINCLOUDS CLOSED IN AGAIN AND THE STUKAS HOMED BACK TO THEIR BASE BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS, LEAVING A TRAIL OF DEATH AND HAVOC.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES! WHERE THE BLAZES ARE THEY? COME ON, MAKE IT SNAPPY!

NO LUCK, SARGE. THEY WENT UP IN FLAMES. WE'VE NOTHING LEFT!



RED-EYED FROM LACK OF SLEEP AND BOMB-DRUNK, THE SURVIVORS FOUGHT DOGGEDLY THROUGH TO THE PASS AND DUG IN FOR THE INEVITABLE ATTACK.



EARLY NEXT MORNING, THE GERMAN PANZERS ENTERED THE PASS, THE SNARL OF THEIR EXHAUSTS ECHOED THUNDEROUSLY FROM THE MOUNTAIN SIDE.



ON THE ANZAC FLANK THE GREEKS WAITED FOR THE GERMAN TANKS. THEIR LIGHT WEAPONS WERE USELESS SO THEY USED THEIR BARE HANDS AND MUSCLES . . .



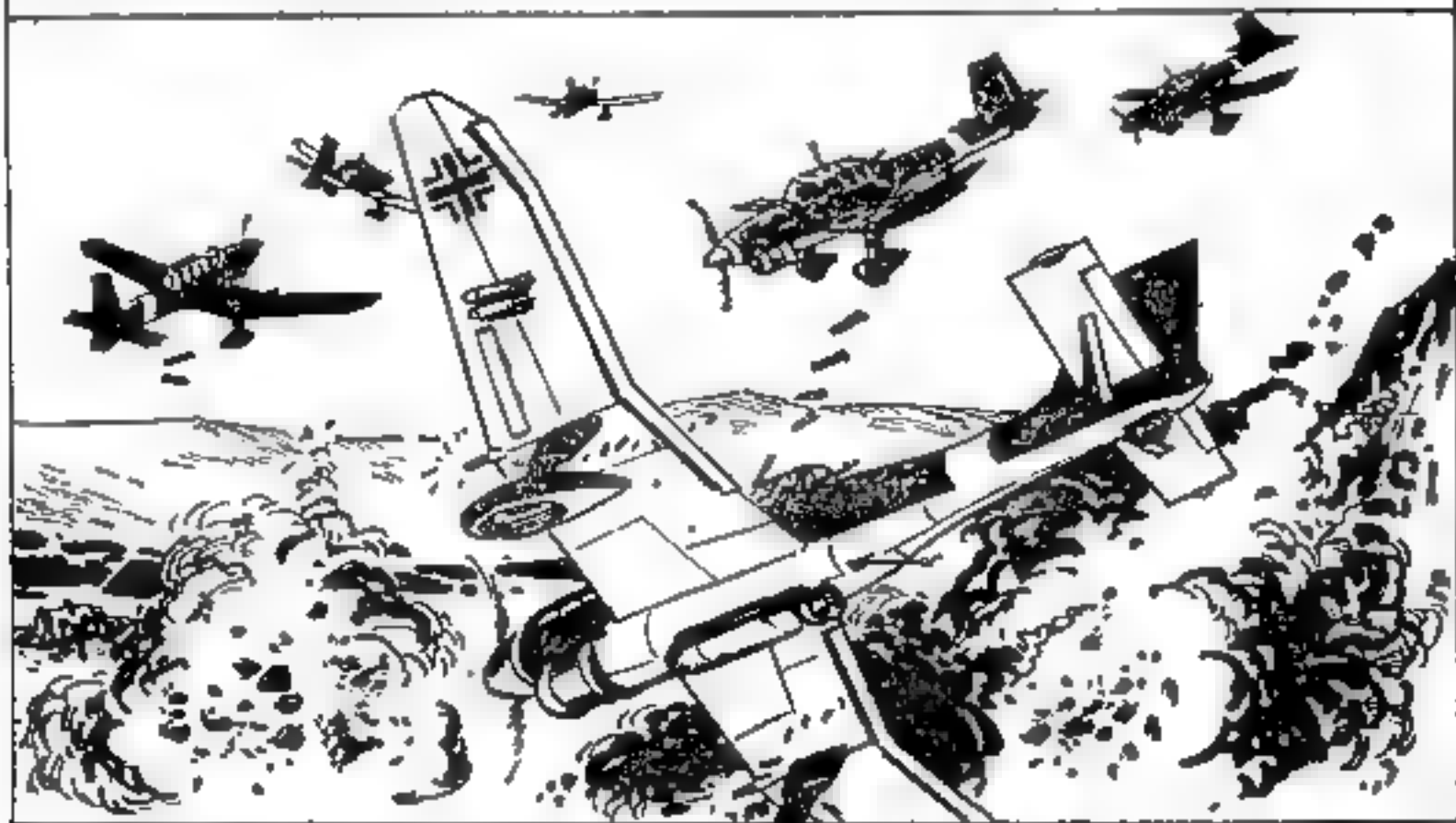
THE TANK COLUMN HALTED. A MAN STEPPED DOWN FROM THE LEADING TANK AND HIS COLD BLUE EYES STUDIED THE MOUNTAIN SIDE. A BLOND, YOUNG MAN, STIFF WITH ARROGANCE.

CLEAR THOSE LICE OUT!
RADIO BACK FOR AIR SUPPORT
I PLAN TO BE THROUGH THE
PASS IN AN HOUR.
SEE TO IT.

JA,
HERR
LEUTNANT.



THE STUKAS CAME BACK TO THE ATTACK, BEATING AND BLUDGEONING A MAN'S WILL TO RESIST, HAMMERING AT HIS NERVES WITH SCREAMING CRESCENDOS OF SOUND.



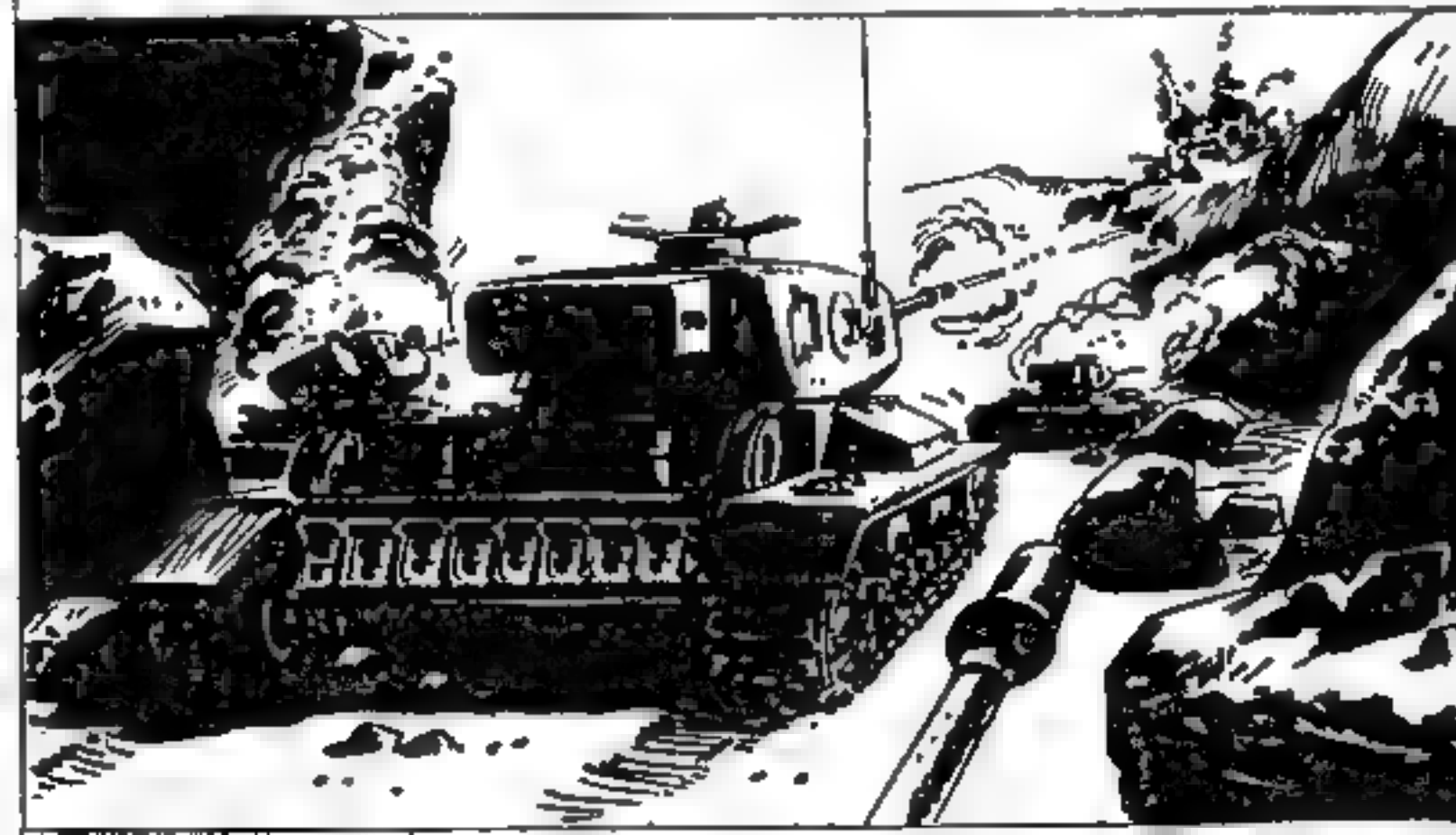
SLOWLY THE PANZERS CAME ON LIKE VAST, GREY-GREEN BEETLES . . . INTO THE RANGE OF THE ANZAC GUNS.



ONE OF THE TANKS WAS HIT AND GROUND TO A HALT. A GREAT GOUT OF FLAME BURST FROM ITS TURRET.



THE TANK GUNS CAME ROUND TO BEAR, PROBING FOR THE ANZAC GUN POSITIONS. IT DID NOT TAKE THEM LONG TO FIND THE RANGE.



IT WAS A BATTLE BETWEEN GERMANS CASED IN ARMOUR AND ANZACS PERCHED OPENLY ON A HILLSIDE . . . AND THE ANZACS OUTFOUGHT THEM!



SLOWLY THE PANZERS STARTED TO BACK AWAY.



GARNETT WAS A SHREWD PROPHET. THE STUKAS CAME BACK, ACCOMPANIED BY STRAFING ME 109'S WITH THEIR CHATTERING, SEARCHING CANNON. AND STILL THE ANZACS HELD ON!



FOR TWO DAYS AND NIGHTS THEY HUNG OUT ON THE MOUNTAIN SLOPE UNTIL AT LAST, SHORT OF AMMUNITION, THE LIMBS TWITCHING WITH FATIGUE, THEY RECEIVED FRESH ORDERS.

THE GREEK HIGH COMMAND HAVE QUIT. WE'RE PULLING OUT. STAND BY TO MOVE OUT AT DUSK. WE'RE COVERING THE RETREAT OF THE MAIN BODY.



THE TORTURED NERVES OF PRIVATE GUS MACKLIN CRIED OUT IN PROTEST AGAINST THE FUTILITY OF IT ALL.

THE PERISHING GREEKS! THEY DID THIS TO US! ALL OUR SQUADDIES GONE FOR NOTHING... HARRIS... BUTCHER ... SHAW...

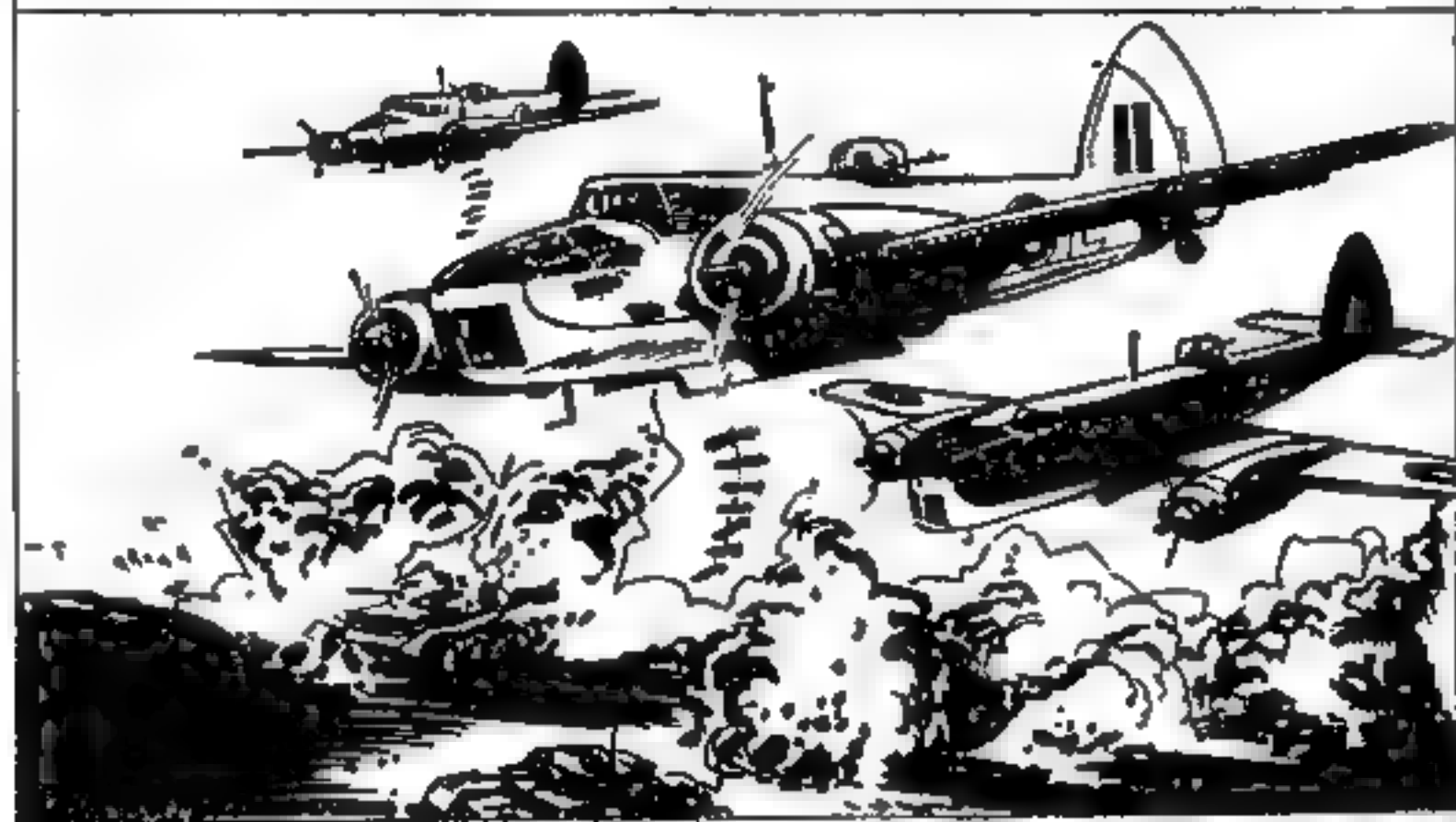
DON'T BLAME THE GREEKS GUS. THEY FOUGHT THE EYTES TO A STANDSTILL. THEY'VE BEEN LET DOWN BY THEIR TOP BRASS. THE ARMY DIDN'T QUIT... IT WAS SOLD OUT!



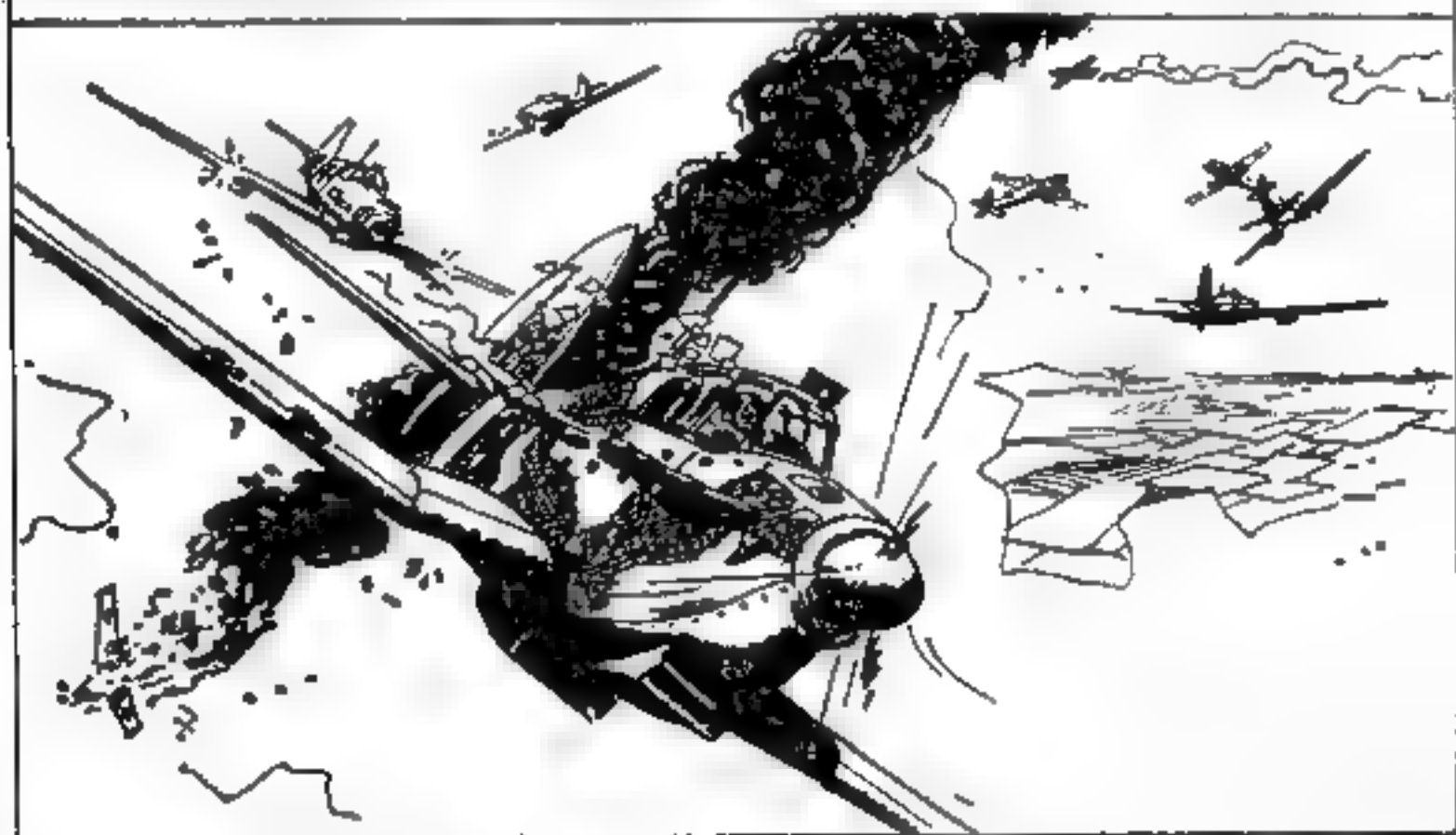
AND SO THEY RETRACED THE PATH OF BLOOD AND SWEAT ACROSS THE THESSALONIAN PLAIN, FIGHTING LIKE TIGERS TO COVER THE BATTERED REMNANTS OF 6TH. DIVISION.



INTO THE STRUGGLE, THE ALLIES FLUNG EVERYTHING THEY HAD TO STEM THE ADVANCING PANZERS.



OUTNUMBERED TEN TO ONE BY THE SWARMING LUFTWAFFE ME-109S, THE HURRICANES AND BLENHEIMS FOUGHT TO THE BITTER END.



AND NOW THE ANZAC 6TH DIVISION WAITED ON THE BEACHES TO BE TAKEN OFF, ANGRY, DISILLUSIONED MEN WHO HID THEIR FEELINGS WITH BITTER JESTS . . .



WHERE DO
WE GO FROM HERE,
COBBERS?

I'VE JUST HAD
A WORD WITH THE
GENERAL. HE SAYS
HITLER AIN'T
DECIDED YET!

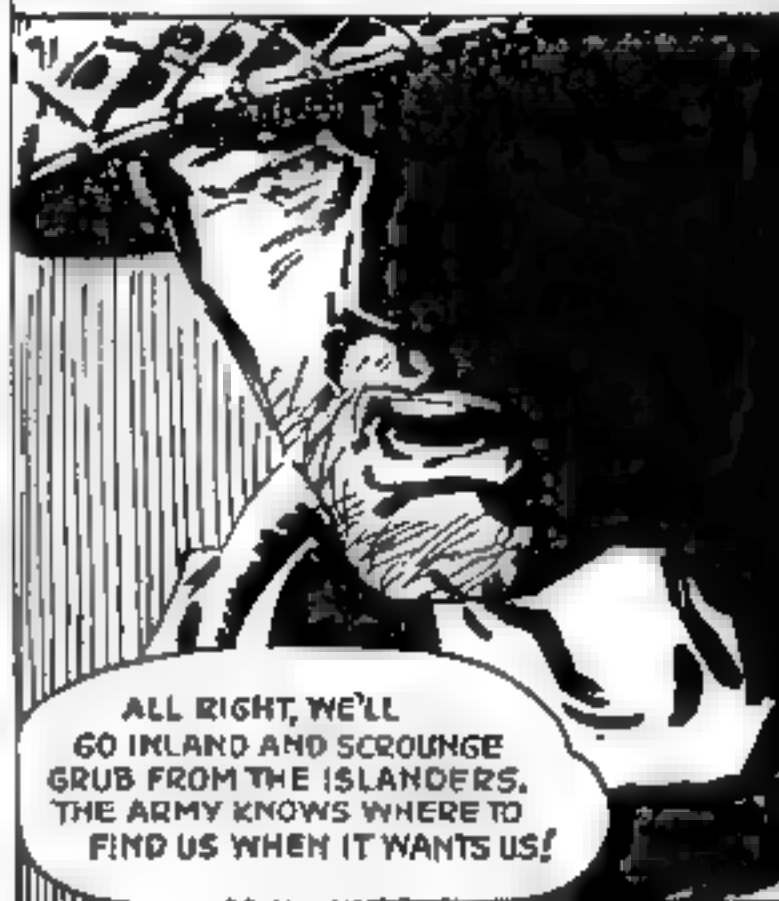
GARNETT'S REARGUARD DETACHMENT REACHED THE BEACH THAT NIGHT. EARLY NEXT MORNING, A DESTROYER LANDED THEM AT SUDA BAY IN CRETE.



CRETE WAS A VAST CAMP OF FIFTY THOUSAND HUNGRY AND BATTLE-WEARY MEN.



DESPERATE MEN ARE OFTEN FORCED TO TAKE DESPERATE MEASURES.



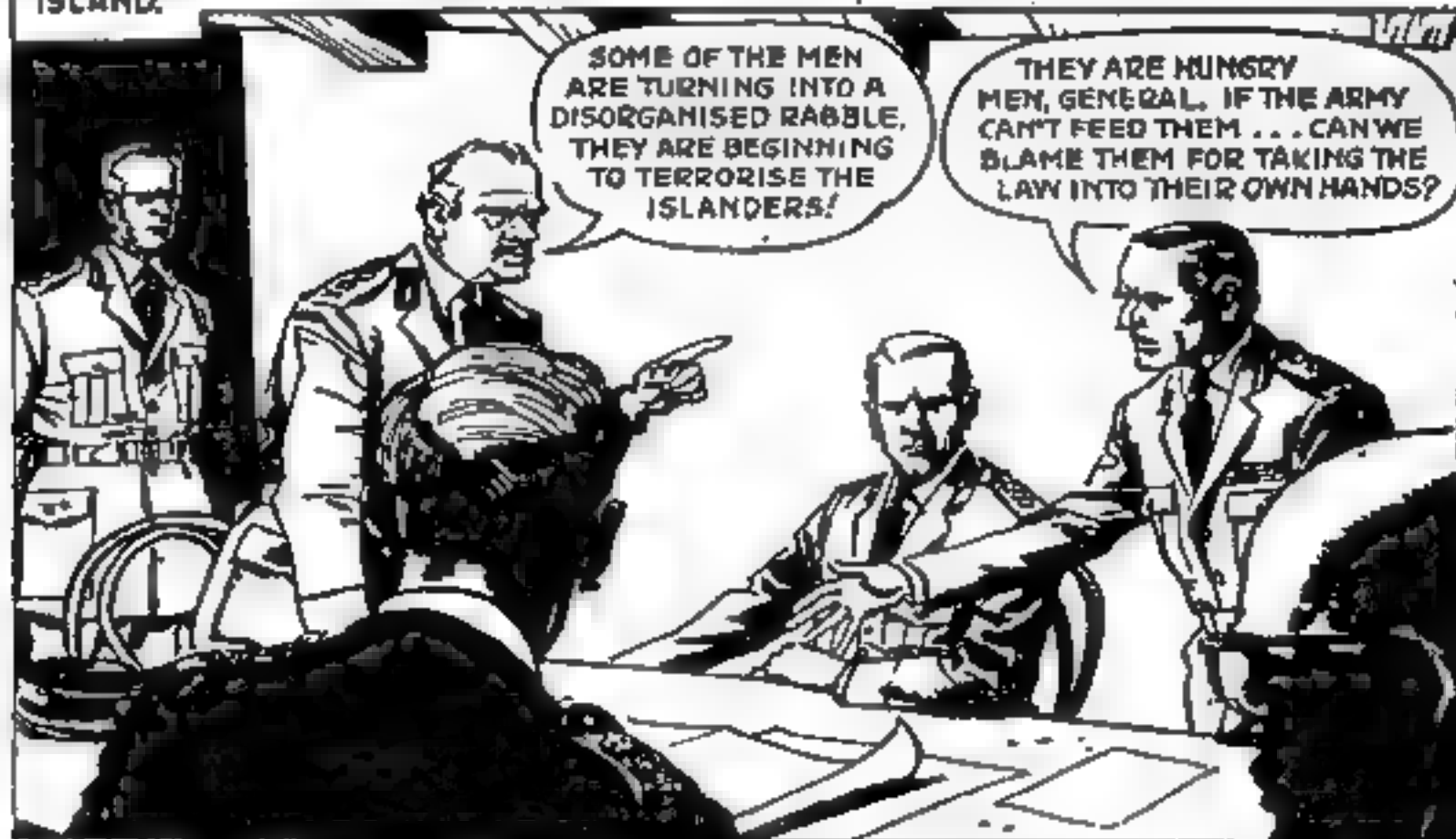
THE WINTERLAND OF THE ISLAND HAD BECOME A JUNGLE OF FAMISHED MARAUDERS.



BUT OTHER CRETANS WERE NOT SO LUCKY.



A CONFERENCE OF HIGH-RANKING OFFICERS HAD BEEN CALLED AT ALLIED H.Q. ON THE ISLAND.



WE ARE AN ARMY, MAITLAND, NOT A BAND OF BRIGANDS! THE NAVY ARE RUSHING FOOD SUPPLIES THROUGH FROM ALEXANDRIA TONIGHT. I WANT THOSE MEN ROUNDED UP AND RE-GROUPED! SEE TO IT!



I BELIEVE MOST OF THESE MEN ARE ANZACS, SIR. THE TOUGHEST FIGHTING MEN WE HAVE. THEY'LL NEED . . . AHM . . . CAREFUL HANDLING.



I AGREE. FIND SOME TOUGH ANZAC N.C.O'S TO HELP! THE M.P.'S. DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU HOW TO DO YOUR JOB, MAITLAND?



Chapter 3. *Massacre*

ORDERS WERE PASSED DOWN AND A SQUAD OF M.P.'S AND HARDBITTEN ANZAC N.C.O.'S WERE ASSIGNED TO THE JOB.

WHAT'S THE DOPE,
BROGAN?

THE GENERAL'S SOUNDING OFF
ABOUT SOME OF OUR BOYS. WE'RE
GOING TO PICK THEM UP BEFORE
CRETE DECLARES WAR ON US!



AND SO, AFTER EIGHTEEN MONTHS, GARNETT CAME FACE TO FACE WITH KARL BROGAN AGAIN . . .

ALL RIGHT, LADS,
THE PARTY'S OVER. YOU'VE
HAD YOUR FUN, NOW WE'RE
TAKING YOU... **GARNETT!**

BROGAN!



THE OLD HATRED FLARED UP ANEW IN BROGAN'S DEEPSET EYES. IT CAME OUT IN HIS SNARLING GRIN.



BROGAN IGNORED THE PEASANT.



GARNETT FELL BACK ON THE ONLY POSSIBLE DEFENCE AGAINST A BULLYING H.C.O. — THE MOCKING, GOADING SARCASM THAT DROVE BENEATH A MAN'S SKIN. BUT BROGAN WAS NOT TO BE DRAWN.

I GOT THEM FOR KEEPING MY NOSE CLEAN AND KNOWING HOW TO HANDLE MEN. I CAN HANDLE YOU, GARNETT. I'M GOING TO BREAK YOU!

NOT A CHANCE. I'M NOT IN YOUR MOB. YOU COULDN'T TOUCH ME WITH A LAWYER'S WRIT! YOU'RE LICKED, BROGAN!



BUT GARNETT WAS WRONG. TWO DAYS LATER, HIS COMPANY WERE MADE UP TO FULL STRENGTH . . . AND AMONG THE NEW M.C.O.'S WAS BROGAN!

IT'S THE LUCK OF THE DRAW, GARNETT I'LL SEE YOU AFTER PARADE.

AFTER THE PARADE BROGAN TOOK GARNETT TO ONE SIDE.

I WANGLED THIS TRANSFER FOR ONE REASON ONLY . . . TO GET AT YOU. I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU EAT DIRT!

DON'T OVERDO IT, BROGAN. WE'VE STILL GOT A WAR ON OUR HANDS... OR HAD YOU FORGOTTEN?

FROM THEN ON GARNETT WAS A MARKED MAN . . .

I NEED A DETAIL TO CHECK THE WRE OVER AT MONOKLITAS VALLEY. YOU, GARNETT, AND THREE OTHERS.

BUT I'VE JUST COME OFF A FOUR-HOUR GUARD SPELL. DOES IT HAVE TO BE ME?

GARNETT KNEW THAT BROGAN WAS OUT TO BREAK HIM . . . OR DRIVE HIM BEYOND THE EDGE OF DISCRETION TO OPEN REBELLION!



THAT WAS THE BEGINNING. FOR A WEEK BROGAN HOUNDED AND HAZED THE ENGLISHMAN WITH AN IMPLACABLE THOROUGHNESS . . .



GARNETT WAS TOO PROUD TO COMPLAIN TO HIS REGIMENTAL OFFICERS . . . AND BROGAN KNEW THAT, TOO.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT YOU CAN ALWAYS COMPLAIN . . . OR TAKE A PUNCH AT ME. WHY DON'T YOU, SOLDIER?

I'LL PICK MY OWN TIME, BROGAN, AND WHEN I DO . . . YOUR STRIPES WON'T HELP YOU.



MEANWHILE, THE GERMAN HIGH COMMAND IN GREECE PUT THE FINAL POLISH ON THEIR PLANNED INVASION OF CRETE.

GENTLEMEN, THE FUHRER HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THE INVASION DATE. IT IS MAY THE TWENTIETH, AND AT HIS OWN REQUEST, OUR SPEARHEAD WILL BE THE FIRST ASSAULT REGIMENT!



THE 1ST. ASSAULT REGIMENT WERE GLIDER-BORNE STORM-TROOPERS, THE ELITE OF THE GERMAN ARMY. PICKED MEN, FANATICALLY BRAVE AND DEVOTED. THE-BLONDE YOUNG MEN OF THE THIRD REICH . . .



THESE WERE BACKED BY THE 7TH. PARACHUTE AND 5TH. MOUNTAIN DIVISIONS, TOUGH VETERANS AND FORMIDABLE FIGHTERS. ON THE EVE OF THE INVASION . . .



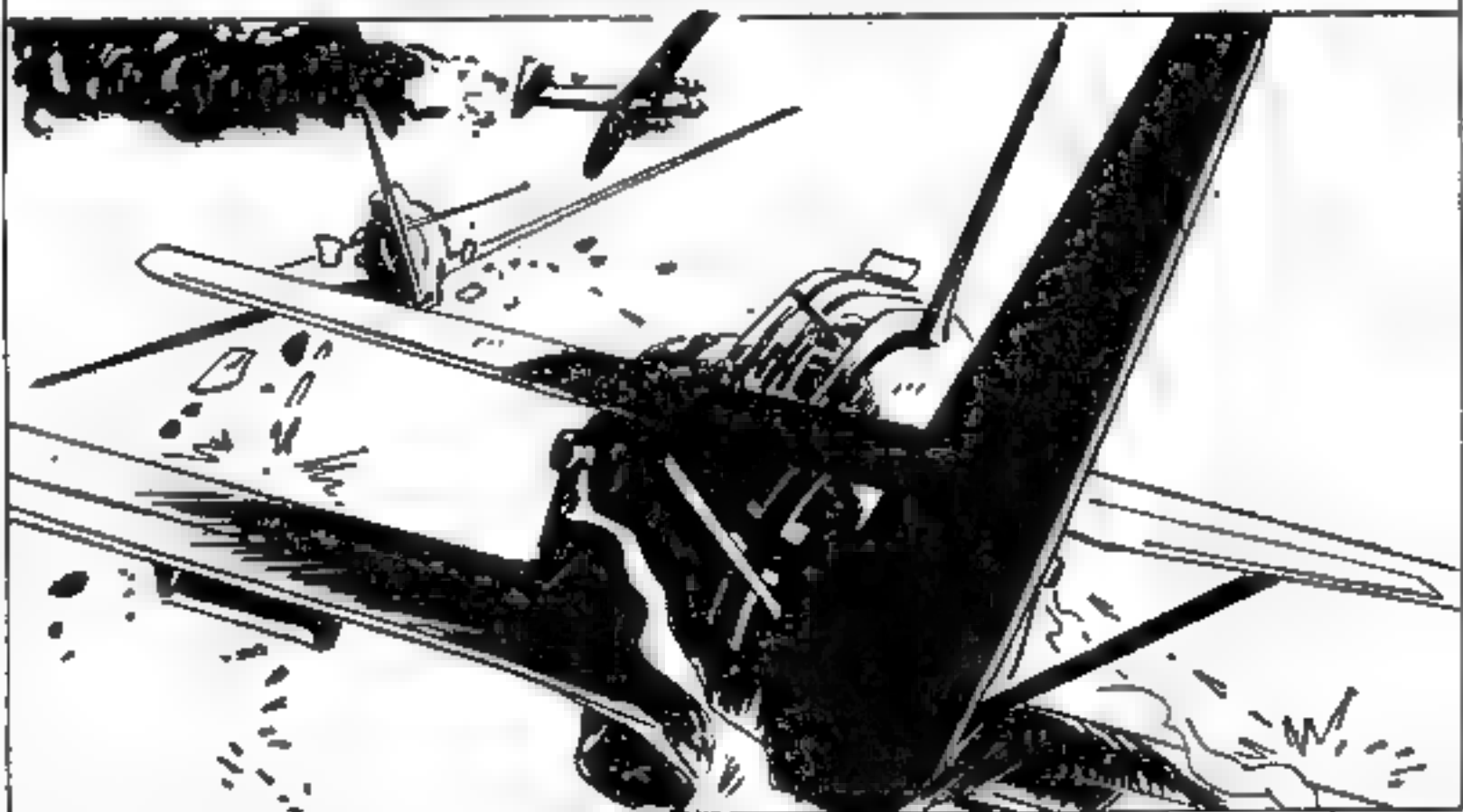
DAWN BROKE THIN AND CLEAR OVER CRETE ON THE TWENTIETH DAY OF MAY 1941. OPERATION MERCURY BEGAN WITH A MASSED BOMBING ATTACK BY THE LUFTWAFFE.



THE SKY FILLED WITH THE ROAR OF ENGINES AND THE SHRILL WHINE OF FALLING BOMBS. THE GROUND SHOOK AND SHIVERED . . .



THE LAST OF THE HURRICANES TOOK TOLL OF THE HEAVY ENEMY BOMBERS . . . ONLY TO BE POUNCED UPON IN TURN BY THE PATROLLING MESSERSCHMITTS . . .



SWIFTLY THE ATTACK MOUNTED TO A PEAK OF SAVAGE FEROCITY.



SUDDENLY IT WAS OVER. THE BOMBERS WHEELED AND TURNED BACK. IN THE FIRST UNEASY SILENCE GARNETT FOUND SERGEANT BROGAN SQUATTING BESIDE HIM.

FEELIN' SCARED, POMMIE? AND DON'T TELL ME YOU AIN'T OR I'LL CALL YOU A LIAR!

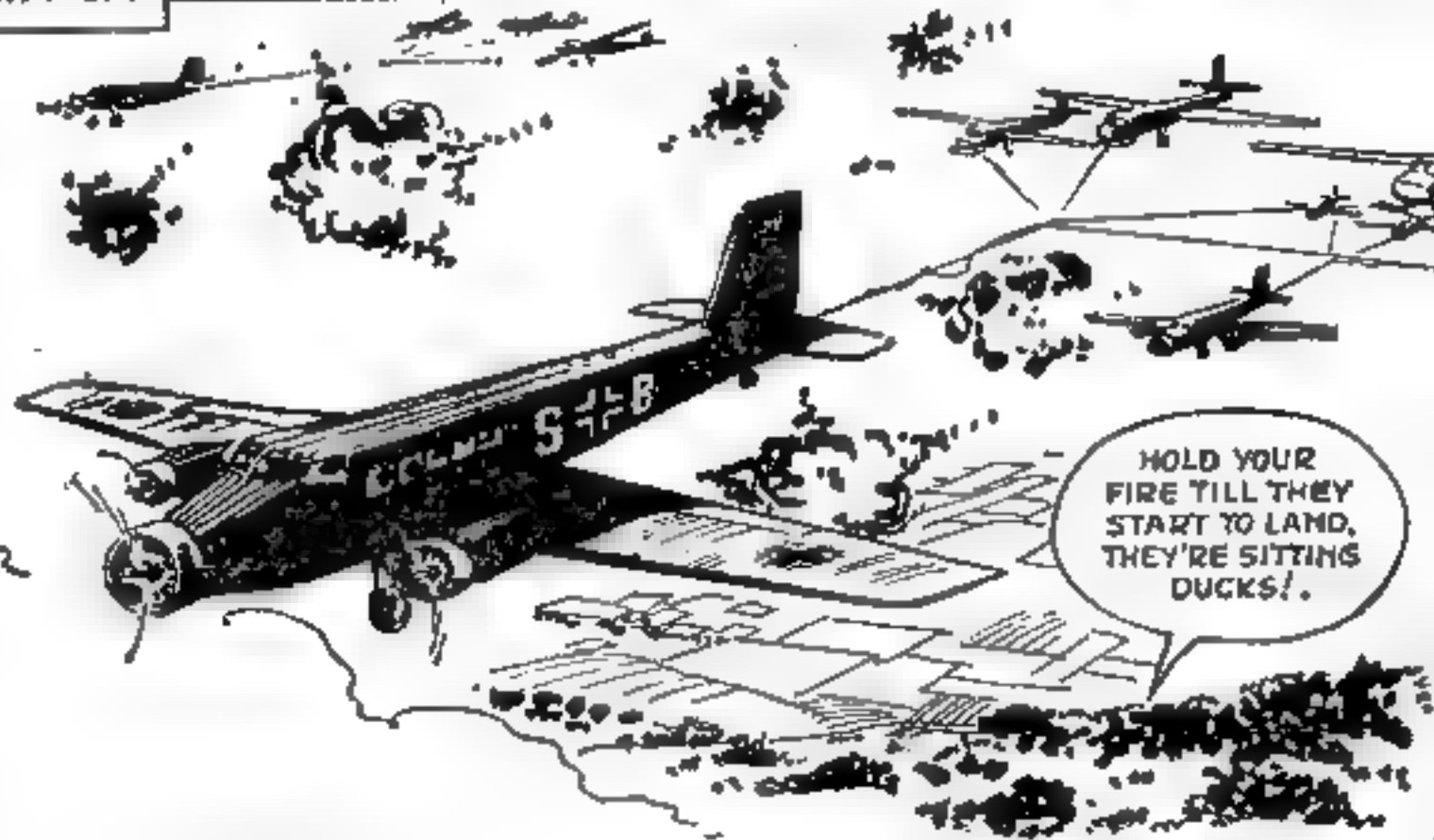
WHY NOT? YOU'VE CALLED ME EVERYTHING ELSE, BROGAN!

THE HARD-FACED SERGEANT'S TONE OF VOICE CHANGED ABRUPTLY THEN, AS IF HE WAS CALLING A TEMPORARY TRUCE TO THEIR PRIVATE FEUD.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

YOU OUGHT TO KNOW, SOLDIER... AIRBORNE SQUADS AND PARATROOPS. BETTER CHECK YOUR GUNS OVER. YOU ONLY GET ONE MISTAKE WITH THOSE BOYS, THE LAST!

ONLY MINUTES LATER, THE ANZACS SAW THE STRINGS OF AIR-TOWED GLIDERS MOVING IN ON THEM.



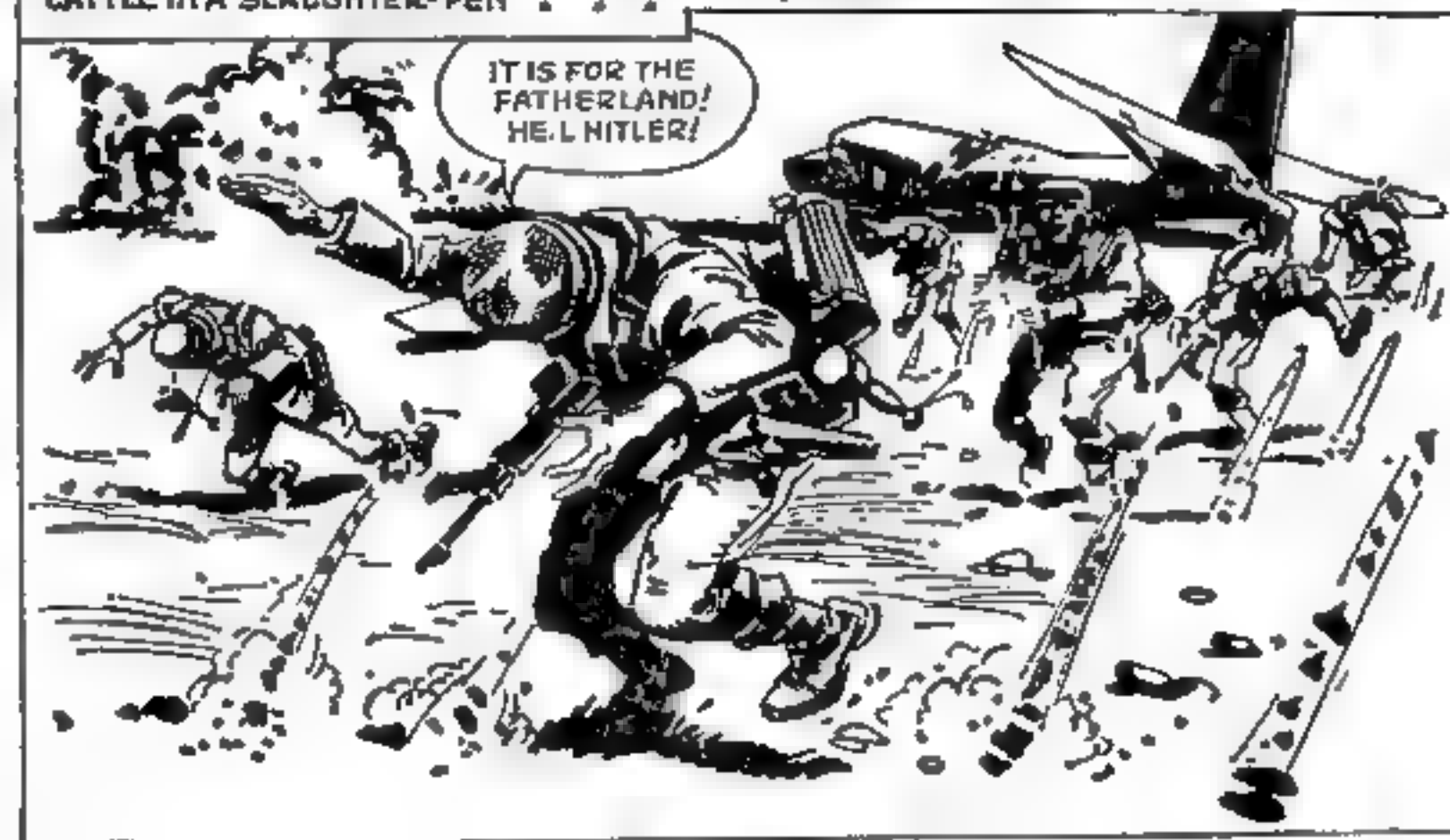
HOLD YOUR FIRE TILL THEY START TO LAND, THEY'RE SITTING DUCKS!

Against All Odds

AT A HUNDRED FEET THE GLIDERS DISENGAGED FROM EACH OTHER AND BEGAN TO SKID DOWN . . . INTO A HOLOCAUST OF CONCENTRATED FIRE!



THE YOUNG WARRIORS OF HITLER'S BELOVED ASSAULT REGIMENT WERE DYING LIKE CATTLE IN A SLAUGHTER-PEN . . .



IN FIFTEEN MURDEROUS MINUTES, A BATTALION OF THE FINEST FIGHTING REGIMENT IN THE GERMAN ARMY HAD BEEN WIPE OUT. AND STILL THEIR BROTHERS FOLLOWED . . .



THE MORNING SKY BLOSSOMED WITH A THOUSAND PARACHUTES FALLING HELPLESSLY ON TO THE WAITING ANZAC GUNS.



TOWARDS NOON, THE ATTACK SLACKENED MOMENTARILY. GARNETT QUENCHED HIS THIRST AND COOLED THE HEATED BARREL OF HIS GUN.



YOU KNOW THE JERRIES, BROTHER. IF THEY WANT A THING BADLY ENOUGH . . . LIVES DON'T COUNT. THEY WANT CREYE LIKE A FOOTSLIGGER WANTS PAYDAY. THEY'LL BE BACK!

Chapter 4. *The Supreme Sacrifice*

THE ATTACKS RENEWED WITH A VICIOUS INTENSITY. ALL THAT DAY AND THE NEXT THE ANZACS FOUGHT THEM OFF, HUNTING THEIR QUARRY DOWN LIKE GAME THROUGH THE OLIVE GROVES.



THEN, ON THE THIRD DAY, THE GERMANS GOT THE CHANCE FOR WHICH THEY HAD SACRIFICED SO MANY LIVES. A POCKET OF PARATROOPERS, FIGHTING LIKE FIENDS, REACHED THE MALEME AIRFIELD!

TELL 'EM
WE HAVE REACHED
MALEME. WE NEED MORTARS,
AMMUNITION, MACHINE GUNS,
FLAME-THROWERS!
SCHNELL!



WITH INCREDIBLE EFFICIENCY, THE HUGE TRANSPORTS DROPPED GUNS AND SUPPLIES DOWN TO THEM. THEN MORE PARATROOPERS JOINED THEM, PROTECTED NOW BY A SCREEN OF MORTAR SHELLS AND MACHINE GUN FIRE.



BACKED BY SUPERIOR FIRE-POWER, THEY BEGAN TO INFILTRATE BEHIND THE ANZAC POSITIONS.



AS THEY RACED THROUGH THE TREES, BROGAN PULLED UP ABRUPTLY. THEY WERE CAUGHT IN A STEEL TRAP!

I CALL ON YOU TO SURRENDER. THERE IS NO DISGRACE IN DEFEAT. BUT IF YOU FIGHT YOU WILL BE TREATED AS GUERRILLAS AND SHOT WITHOUT MERCY!

DON'T LET 'EM FOOL YOU! THOSE SWINE DON'T TAKE PRISONERS!

BROGAN SPOKE IN A TAUT, HARSH WHISPER . . .

GET READY TO RUSH 'EM. THEY MAY GET SOME OF US BUT IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE. YOU READY, POMMIE?

I'M RIGHT BESIDE YOU.

TOMMY GUNS BLAZING FROM THE HIP, THE ANZACS HURLED THEMSELVES TOWARDS THE GUN. BEFORE THEY WERE HALFWAY IT'S DEVIL'S STACCATO THUNDERED INTO L FE . . .



WITH LUNGS STRAINING FOR BREATH AND SWEAT STINGING THEIR EYES, BROGAN AND GARNETT REACHED THE MACHINE GUN TOGETHER.



BUT, IN THE CONFUSION OF BATTLE, BROGAN DID NOT HEAR THAT WARNING SHOUT. GARNETT MOVED QUICKLY . . .



A FEW SAVAGE MINUTES LATER AND THE FIGHT WAS OVER.

ONLY TWO OF US LEFT. WE'LL GRAB THIS GUN AND A COUPLE O' THEIR SCHMEISSERS. LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT.

WHAT THE DEVIL'S HAPPENING? WHERE ARE THE REST OF OUR BOYS?



AS THEY SET OFF THROUGH THE OLIVE GROVE, BROGAN TURNED TO GARNETT. THERE WAS THE SAME COLD HATRED IN HIS VOICE . . . BUT ALSO A GRUDGING RESPECT.

NEVER THOUGHT I'D OWE MY LIFE TO A POMMIE, SOLDIER. I HATE BEING IN DEBT.

THINK NOTHING OF IT, BROGAN. I'D HAVE DONE THE SAME FOR ANYONE!



AT LAST THEY CAME TO AN ABANDONED VILLAGE. FOR A TIME THEY WATCHED IT, WARY OF A TRAP.



AS THEY TRAVERSED THE STREET, A VOICE CALLED OUT HOARSELY. GARNETT STIFFENED AND NERVED HIMSELF FOR THE NEVITABLE BURST OF GUNFIRE.



A BUNCH OF IRON-FACED MEN APPEARED FROM A COTTAGE . . . AND WITH A WAVE OF RELIEF GARNETT RECOGNISED THEM AS FELLOW-FIGHTERS.



YEAH?
THEY THOUGHT THAT
TOO. SOME OF THOSE
JERRIES WERE WEARING
ANZAC GEAR! THAT'S
WHAT FOOLED US!

TAKE IT EASY, COBBER.
WE'RE ANZACS ALL RIGHT,
ANYBODY CAN SEE
THAT.

BUT ONCE THEY HAD PROVED THEIR IDENTITY,
THE TWO ANZACS WERE TOLD THE SOMBRE
NEWS.

THEY GOT MALEME AIRSTRIP THEN
THEY STARTED TO POUR IN MEN AND
GUNS. THEY EVEN HAD FLAME-THROWERS.
WE HEARD A RUMOUR THAT OUR BOYS
ARE MOVING ACROSS TO THE
COAST AT SPHAKIA FOR
EVACUATION!

THAT CAN'T
BE TRUE!



BROGAN HAD TAKEN COMMAND.

I'LL LAY YOU TEN TO ONE THE
HEINIES PUT THAT ONE OUT. NOBODY'S
EVACUATING! WE'RE GOING TO BREAK
OUT OF HERE AND LINK UP WITH
OUR LADS . . . WHEREVER
THEY ARE!



LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE STREET GARNETT HAD A SUDDEN INSPIRATION.

WAIT, BROGAN!
WHY DON'T WE PLAY
THE JERRIES AT THEIR
OWN GAME? THOSE
DEAD PARATROOPERS
OUT THERE... IF WE
PUT THEIR RIG ON WE
MIGHT BLUFF OUR
WAY THROUGH. IT'S
AN OUTSIDE
CHANCE.

IT'S AN
IDEA, POMMIE.
LET'S TRY IT.

TEN MINUTES LATER, FEELING BULKY AND AWKWARD IN THE UNACCUSTOMED PARATROOP GEAR, THE LITTLE BODY OF ANZACS MOVED OUT INTO THE OPEN.

WE'LL HEAD FOR
THE HILLS. AND I HOPE
WE SEE OUR BOYS BEFORE
THEY SEE US!

IT'S OUR ONLY
CHANCE THIS WAY, SARGE.
I'VE A FEELING THE JERRIES
ARE OVER-RUNNING
THE ISLAND.



AFTER SEVERAL CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH GERMAN PARATROOP PATROLS, THEY PULLED UP AT NIGHTFALL. AHEAD OF THEM THEY HEARD THE ROAR OF REYVING TANK-ENGINES.



SCREENED BELOW THE TREES OF THE OLIVE GROVE, THEY FOUND THE GERMAN TANK PARK WITH ITS ATTENDANT CREWS, WORKING UNDER SHROJDED LIGHTS.



THE TWO MEN EXCHANGED GLANCES AND THE IDEA WAS BORN.

OKAY, POMMIE, IT'S AN IDEA.
BUT WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST.
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT
THAT GEAR? THERE WON'T
BE TIME TO FUMBLE
WITH IT.

WE
CAPTURED
ONE IN GREECE
ONCE. THEY'RE
SIMPLE
ENOUGH.



WORKING TO A SWIFTLY CONCEIVED PLAN BROGAN MOVED OUT INTO THE OPEN. THE SENTRY'S CHALLENGE CAME LIKE THE BARK OF A MORTAR!

HALT!
WHAT IS YOUR UNIT?
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?



GARNETT FELLED THE SENTRY SOUNDLESSLY AND THEN EASED ONE OF THE FLAME-THROWERS FROM THE HEAP. HE TESTED THE CONTROLS CAREFULLY, THEN ROSE TO HIS FEET.

THIS IS IT, SARGE.
IF THAT TANKER GOES UP,
IT'LL TAKE HALF THE TANKS
WITH IT. THEY WON'T
BE ABLE TO CONTROL
IT.

GO AHEAD,
POMMIE.
WE'LL COVER
YOU.

AS GARNETT PRESSED THE TRIGGER A PLUME OF FLAME SNAKED OUT, ENVELOPING THE GREAT TANKER IN ITS HOT BREATH. THERE WAS A PAUSE AND THEN . . .

AAAGH...!

THE FLAMES RAN ALONG THE GROUND, FOLLOWING THE TRACKS OF SPILLED PETROL, MOVING FROM TANK TO TANK.



THEN THEY WERE RUNNING FROM THE OLIVE GROVE WITH THE CRACKLING ROAR OF FLAMES BEHIND THEM AND THE SHOUTS OF FRIGHTENED MEN.



THE FIRST TANKER EXPLODED WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR . . . FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY THE SECOND. THE NIGHT SKY GLOWED WITH FLAME. BROGAN GRINNED AT GARNETT.

NICE WORK, POMMIE. AND YOU'LL NEVER KNOW HOW MUCH I HATE TO SAY THAT!

DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF DIGGER. YOU MIGHT REGRET IT.



AND THEN MISFORTUNE STRUCK A CRUEL BLOW. A RANDOM BULLET FIRED SIGHTLESSLY IN THE NIGHT FOUND A BILLET. BROGAN STAGGERED AND NEARLY FELL.

BROGAN! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I CAN TAKE IT, POMMIE. KEEP GOING!



BROGAN STAGGERED ON FOR A TIME BUT HE WAS BADLY HURT AND WEAKENING FAST. AT LAST HE PULLED UP . . .

IT'S NO GOOD, POMMIE. I'M SCUPPERED. SCRAM OUT OF IT AND LEAVE ME HERE.

THAT'S FOOL TALK! HERE, I'LL HELP YOU UP TO THAT COTTAGE AND WE'LL WORK SOMETHING OUT.



THEY PICKED THE SERGEANT UP AND TOOK HIM UP TO THE COTTAGE. THERE WAS A FLASH OF THE OLD ENMITY IN BROGAN'S VOICE . . .

LISTEN, POMMIE!
THIS IS A WAR . . . NOT A
SUNDAY SCHOOL PICN C' YOUR
JOB IS TO SAVE YOURSELF!
THAT'S AN ORDER! NOW BEAT
IT BEFORE I BOUNCE THIS
GUN OFF YOUR SKULL!

OKAY, SOLDIER.
WHO WANTS TO SAVE
A BULL-HEADED MUTT
ANYWAY?

GARNETT KNEW WHERE HIS DUTY LAY . . . TO ESCAPE TO FREEDOM AND CARRY ON THE FIGHT AGAINST THE INVADER. HE KNEW ALL THAT BUT THEN HE MADE HIS DECISION.

YOU BLOKES CARRY ON.
I . . . I FORGOT SOMETHING.
BEYOND THE HILL THERE'S
A STREAM THAT'LL LEAD
YOU TO THE COAST. I'LL
SEE YOU LATER. . .

GARNETT SQUATTED DOWN
BESIDE SERGEANT BROGAN.

GARNETT, YOU'RE
A FOOL! A DURNED
BRAINLESS IDIOT!
JUST WHAT YOU'D EXPECT
FROM A POMMIE! KNOW
WHAT JERRY WILL DO
TO US WHEN HE
FINDS US?



BROGAN GRINNED WHEN GARNETT REPLIED . . .

NO, BUT I KNOW
WHAT WE'LL DO TO
JERRY. HOW ABOUT
IT, BROGAN? OUR
LAST FIGHT?

IT'S A DEAL,
POMMIE. YOU'RE
ALL RIGHT, I RECKON.
TEN MORE YEARS DOWN
UNDER WOULD HAVE
MADE A MAN
OF YOU.



THEY ~~SCRAMLED~~ BACK TO WAIT FOR THE ENEMY. PRESENTLY, GARNETT HEARD THE SLOW FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE AND PEERED FROM THE WINDOW.

THEY'RE GOING PAST,
SARGE. WE'RE ALL RIGHT.
WAIT! THERE'S A DOG
SNIFFING AT THE DOOR!
IT'S TRYING TO GET IN!



THE GERMAN PATROL LEADER SWUNG ROUND, GUN AT THE READY. HE RAPPED OUT AN ORDER.

THERE IS SOMEONE
INSIDE THERE! TAKE
NO CHANCES. KICK THE
DOOR IN AND BLAST
THEM OUT!



AS THE DOOR CLATTERED INWARDS, GARNETT NODDED TO BROGAN AND THEIR GUNS CAME UP . . .

LOOKS LIKE
THIS IS IT!
YOU READY,
COBBER?

I'M READY,
POMMIE . . .
LET 'EM
HAVE IT!

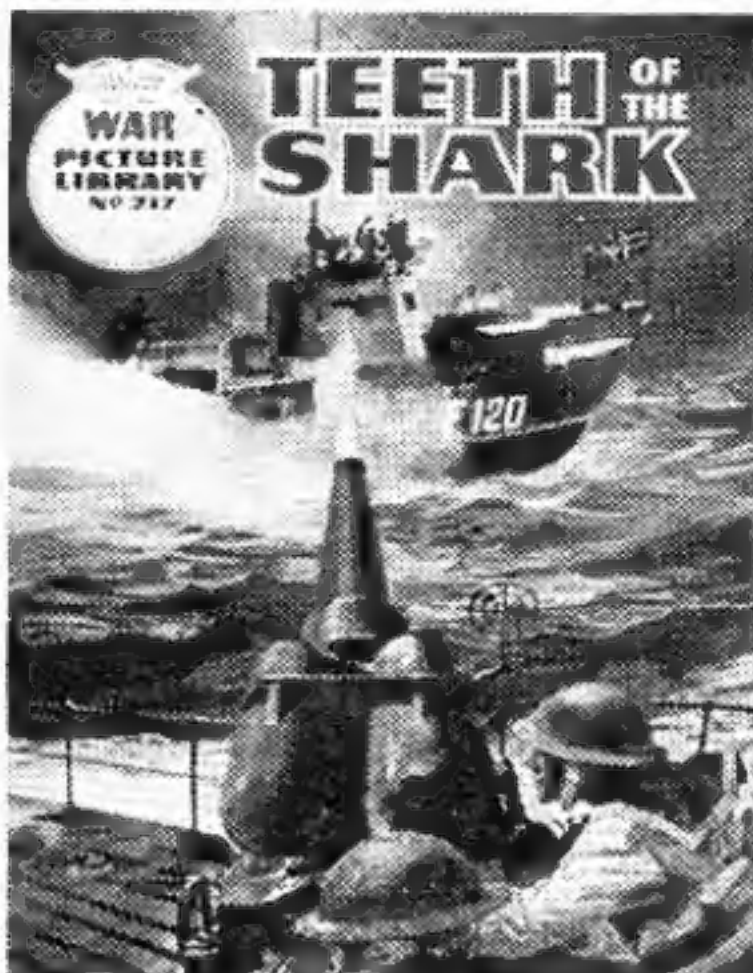
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